Increase in Rail Fares

2850. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is likelihood of any further increase in the rail fares in the near future; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (b) Review of rail fares is a continuous process and these fares are adjusted from time to time to generate internal resources and to meet the rising cost of inputs.

Safe Drinking Water at Railway Stations

2851. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the water available at various Railway stations through out the country is safe enough to drink; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) Yes, Sir. Drinking water supplied at station is clean potable water.

(b) Does not arise.

Cultivation of Railway Land

2852. SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways are incurring huge losses because of non-leasing and unauthorised cultivation of 16150 acres of railway land along 17 rail routes under the Ferozepur Division of Northern Railway;

(b) if so, what remedial steps are proposed; and

(c) whether there is any plan to re-start leasing out the railway

land, where possible, to authorised persons only for cultivation, as per the earlier practice, in order to fetch additional revenues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. While about 600 hactares of railway land is under unauthorised cultivation along the rail routes in Ferozepur Division of Northern Railway, the loss of possible licence fee is not substantial. However, Railways are engaged in a continuous exercise here to remove unauthorised occupants of the railway land as per provisions of Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971, and as per provisions of the Railways Act, 1989.

(c) Yes, Sir. The licensing of railway land for cultivation in selected urban areas have been permitted to Railway staff under 'Grow More Food' scheme which is likely to fetch some revenues.

Dues of SE Railway against private parties

2853. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether South Eastern Railway did not prefer bills on private parties for realization of charges for using rail lines/property;

(b) whether it caused a loss of Rs. 2.58 crores to the Railways till March, 2000; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken to recover the dues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, Railways generally require major parties to set up sidings at their own expense for dealing with inward and outward traffic. When such sidings are constructed, charges as applicable are levied. However, in case traffic is dealt with at existing railway station/goods shed, which are open to public, no such separate charges become due. In such cases therefore no bills are raised separately. No loss has therefore been incurred.